

IN SEARCH OF IDENTITY: REAL PEOPLE BEHIND DRŽIĆ'S CHARACTERS

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ABSTRACT: The majority of Držić's characters are his contemporaries, living models chosen from the local setting as an expression of his efforts to intertwine fiction with reality. By adding local colour to the plays, Držić helped the audience recognize authentic situations and persons. The records of the Criminal Court of the Republic of Dubrovnik reveal that Držić's choice of characters was by no means random, as he tended to single out the characters whose appearance in the play would appeal most to the contemporary audience, and whose participation was to add to the credibility of other elements of his artistic message. It was this synthesis of the fictional narrative with the episodes from everyday life that was to stimulate the spectators to laughter, comedy's ultimate goal.

Encouraged by the popularity of some of his comic characters with the contemporary audience, Croatian Renaissance playwright Marin Držić tended to cast them in his later comedies as well. Thus after *Tirena*, the satyr features in the prologue of *Skup*, Dragić also in *Grižula*, Pomet, apart from being the leading character of the lost comedy, is among the protagonists of *Dundo Maroje*; also, having featured in *Pomet*, the characters of uncle Maroje and Grubiša reappear in *Dundo Maroje*; Tripče Kotoranin features both in *Dundo Maroje* and in the comedy *Tripče de Utoľče*; we encounter Dijana in *Grižula* and in *Pjerin*, *negromant* in *Dundo Maroje* and in *Arkulin* etc. Despite apparent

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similarity with the real people of Držić's day, the mentioned characters belong primarily to the playwright's virtual world and his fancy.¹ This we are explicitly reminded by Stijepo Cerva, actor declaiming the prologue of *Skup*. The comedy was performed on the occasion of his sister's wedding to Sabo Gajčin Palmota (1522-1590) in 1553. Following the artistic illusion, he transformed into a satyr, becoming thus a product of Držić's ingenious fancy: "I am Stijepo and satyr, all in one..."² Similarly, while playing a cruel trick on the gullible Vlach yokel, Stanac, Đivo Pešica is being recognised by the audience as the old man Radat from *Tirena*.³ The actor declaiming the prologue of *Đuho Krpeta* introduces himself in these words: "...I was Žuho a while ago, and now I am Krpeta..."⁴ Artistic fancy has the power to transform things and people. Those from nonartistic reality enter artistic illusion and vice versa, just as the setting becomes that of the playwright's fancy—Dubrovnik turns into Rome. Držić's experience of theatre is not "transcendation above reality into an intentional self-conscious play", but a far more complex system, in which the shifts from reality to imagination and from theatrical illusion to reality take place continuously. Moreover, Držić makes no attempt to extricate the real from the conventional and fictitious.⁵

¹ Although not fictional, Lone de Zauligo is an exception, since he was not Držić's contemporary; he was a citizen of medieval Dubrovnik and lived more than a hundred and fifty years before Držić wrote his comedy *Tripče de Utoľe*, in which Zauligo features as one of the characters. As to why Držić picked him remains obscure. *Testamenta notariae* (hereafter cited as: *Test. Not.*, ser. 10.1, vol. 7, ff. 58v-59r; vol. 8, f. 251; State Archives of Dubrovnik, hereafter cited as SAD); Irmgard Mahnken, *Dubrovački patricijat u XIV veku*, vol. I. Beograd: SANU, 1960: pp. 453-454 (she draws attention to a marriage tie between Darsa/Držić and Zauligo families). Lone was one of the two Držić brothers who, having fled from Dubrovnik during an outbreak of plague, was deprived of his patrician privileges. He managed to retain patronage over the church of All Saints (popularly known as Domino) in Dubrovnik and the small church of St Peter on the Island of Koločep, as cited by Jakša Ravlić, »Genealogije obitelji Držića«, in: *Zbornik radova o Marinu Držiću*, ed. Jakša Ravlić. Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1969: pp. 476-491. Apparently, Marin Držić borrowed Lone de Zauligo not only from his family tradition but also from the town's collective memory and was thus better understood by Držić's than modern audience. Virtual Lone de Zauligo, who is to provide Kate, poor indentured girl, with a dowry, could be an allusion to one of Držić's wealthy contemporaries.

² »Skup«, Prologue, in: Marin Držić, *Djela*, ed. Frano Čale. Zagreb: Sveučilišna naklada Liber, 1979: p. 539.

³ »Novela od Stanca«, Scene II, in: M. Držić, *Djela*: p. 299.

⁴ »Đuho Krpeta«, Prologue, in: M. Držić, *Djela*: p. 526.

⁵ Zvonimir Mrkonjić, »O Držićevoj teatralnosti«, in: *Zbornik radova o Marinu Držiću*: p. 451.

Most of Držić's characters have been modelled after "real" people of his day as an expression of his efforts to intertwine fiction with reality. By adding local colour to the plays, Držić helped the audience recognise authentic situations and persons in their demeanour and speech.⁶ Držić's selection of characters was by no means random. Seeking genuine aspects of human everyday life, his choice rested on the characters who, by virtue of specific features, may have contributed to the dramatic conception of his plays. Details in one's appearance, manners, occupation or even nickname were likely to draw the playwright's attention.⁷ Some of Držić's protagonists lived parallel lives, fictional and real, bearing the same names or nicknames in both comedy and life, such as Điva(n) Pešica, Vlaho, Miho (in *Novela od Stanca*), Mazija (in *Dundo Maroje*) or Drijemalo (in *Skup*). Companies of talented noble youths (and a few elders) entertained the Ragusans by giving dramatic and musical performances during carnival season and at wedding festivities. Rafo Gozze (1519-1591) led a company called *Gardzarija*, in which the young Nikola Gozze acted. Stijepo Cerva was with the *Njarnjasi*, together with the earlier mentioned actors Vlaho, Miho and Đivo Pešica, whose identity cannot be established with certainty. But we do know that the contemporary audience was well acquainted with these young men. If need be, they recited in comedies as themselves. Apart from acting and singing, performing before the Ragusan audience as the local figures of fun required a certain amount of courage as well. The audience often proved highly critical by throwing rotten oranges at the players or as Držić illustrated it in the comedy *Đuho Krpeta*: "Off with you, far be! There'll be trouble! Shame upon you, slay like a wretched woman spindle!" Smelling salts were used to recuperate the frightened actors. For playing the role of Bokčilo, old innkeeper in *Dundo Maroje*, Držić's actor did not put much at stake, as the very comparison with real Bokčilo was a challenge by itself.

A host of evidence points to the fact that Bokčilo, innkeeper accompanying the old miser in his search for the prodigal son in *Dundo Maroje*, was actually the innkeeper (*tovjernar*) Nikola Bočinović (Bočilović), Držić's contemporary, whose name can recurrently be traced in the records of the Dubrovnik Criminal Court in the period 1533-1557. Born in Konavle, Bokčilo is a villain whose

⁶ Slavica Stojan, »Držićevi Konavljani«, in: *Konavle u prošlosti, sadašnjosti i budućnosti*, vol. II. Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 1999: pp. 39-46.

⁷ Z. Mrkonjić, »O Držićevoj teatralnosti«: p. 466.

rustic language and manners offer plenty of fabric for comic characterisation.⁸ Since none of the records provide any details on the tavern owner, there is reason to assume that Nikola Bočilović kept his own vintry or *stranj* in the rented premises. *Tovjernar*, however, was a manservant who, at the end of the day, handed the daily income of the tavern to his master. Although in *Dundo Maroje* Bokčilo is but a servant of the self-centred and thrifty old excentric, the character of an unreliable and weak innkeeper inclined to drinking Držić has borrowed from Dubrovnik's everyday life without even changing his name. Both in real life and comedy Bokčilo's virtues are hardly discernible. His mind is primarily occupied with food, drink and disbowling, and of all Držić's characters he is closest to Rabelais' grotesque and self-indulgent figures.⁹ In his youth, the "real" Bokčilo was accused of having raped Dragna, nicknamed Vilana, maid of Gabrijel Drumpalica. On 22 January 1533 the wretched girl was passing by Nikola Bočinović's vintry when she was pushed inside, battered and then raped.¹⁰ He was sentenced to prison only to find himself in court again, in 1539, for fighting with Đuho Ivanović, leather maker.¹¹ Bokčilo, however, was both witness and victim of various mischiefs that took place in his *stranj* and its neighbourhood, the very heart of the city. Thus on 2 April 1540 he raised an action against a foreigner who had stolen a cork from his barrel while he was pouring wine.¹² A year later, on 30 April 1541, carpenter Ivan from Vitaljina is noted to have smashed the money chest in Bokčilo's tavern.¹³ On 1 April 1542 Nikola Bočinović accused a certain Mihoč for brawling in his tavern.¹⁴ Only a few months later, on 1 September 1542, Nikola

⁸ Niko Kapetanić assumes that the patronymic Bočinović / Bočilović / Bokčilović originates from 1507, when Đivan Bokčilović, son of Bokčilo, became household head in Podvor, hamlet in the vicinity of Pridvorje in Konavle. We know that Đivan had a brother, Živko. Nikola Bočinović / Bočilović / Bokčilović was one of Đivan's, that is, Živko's sons, or presumably a son of an unknown brother, who, in pursuit of a better life, left for the City. The family died out by the end of the sixteenth century, its last descendant being Nikola Bokčilović, a likely grandson of our Bokčilo. See: Niko Kapetanić, *Konavoski epigrafički spomenici iz vremena Dubrovačke Republike*. Dubrovnik-Zagreb: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2000: pp. 27-28.

⁹ Mihail Bahtin, *Stvaralaštvo Fransoa Rablea i narodna kultura srednjega veka i renesanse* [Tvorčestvo Fransua Rable i narodnaya kul'tura srednovekov'ya i Renessansa]. Beograd: Nolit, 1978: p. 130.

¹⁰ *Lamenta de intus* (hereafter cited as: *Lam. Int.*), ser. 51, vol. 82, f. 41 (SAD).

¹¹ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 85, f. 53.

¹² *Lam. Int.*, vol. 86, f. 166.

¹³ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 86, f. 223v.

¹⁴ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 89, f. 17.

Bočinović was battered in front of his own tavern.¹⁵ While sitting in front of his tavern facing the church of St Barbara and minding his own business, he was pushed off the stairs by Nikola, son of Pavo, flute player, “without any reason whatsoever”. The innkeeper fell from the fourth stair, as testified subsequently by *zđur* (court warden) Ilija.¹⁶

After this incident Bokčilo seemed to have restrained himself from brawls or quarrels, although he often testified on the misruly events in his tavern. In 1548 at the Criminal Court hearing he testified to having seen the nobleman Frano Pozza hit Petar Nikolić, nicknamed Lijepi.¹⁷ By the end of the same year, he had testified in two actions related to the theft of wine from the tavern of Miho Sorgo.¹⁸ Bokčilo had apparently signed business contracts with foreigners. When Vukosav Bošković and Jacomo Galiberti from Barletta engaged in a fight in front of the Rector's Palace on 7 January 1549, Jacomo tended to describe it as business negotiations following a venture agreement with Nikola Bočinović.¹⁹ In 1550, innkeeper Nikola Bočinović reported a serious offence and damage (act of vengeance?), as twenty-three barrels, the property of Nikola Bona, had been smashed to pieces.²⁰ Culprit being unknown, the damage had to be compensated by Bokčilo. This case casts some light on the possible tavern owner and a link between uncle Maroje and Nikola Bona. According to the 1427 cadastral survey of Konavle, Bokčilo's ancestors were probably the tenant farmers of the Gozze noble family (branch living in Pustijerna) or, less likely, of the Tudisi family, owners of a *desetina* (“ten”) of St Martin in Podvor.²¹ Judging by this document, Bokčilo may have been a serf of the Gozze or Tudisi patrician family. The possibility that the estate, together with tenant farmers, had been sold to another patrician family at some point later in time must also be taken into account, leaving us to speculate on the true identity of “real”

¹⁵ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 89, f. 112v.

¹⁶ The church of St Barbara stood in today's Vara Street. Its portal faced today's *Božidarevićeva ulica* or St Barbara's Street at the time. The remains of this church destroyed in the 1667 earthquake may still be seen. It was considered one of the main town churches and upon the City's division into 12 parishes in 1556, St Barbara became a parish church. The carpenters' confraternity, founded in 1226 in St Andrew's church in Pile, then moved to St Barbara's. See: Lukša Beritić, »Ubikacija nestalih građevinskih spomenika u Dubrovniku«. *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 10 (1956): pp. 50-51.

¹⁷ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 93, f. 62v.

¹⁸ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 92, ff. 152v, 154.

¹⁹ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 93, f. 221.

²⁰ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 94, f. 231.

²¹ *Libro rosso*, ser. 12 (*Cathasticum*), vol. 4, f. 362 (SAD).

Bokčilo's masters. The last mention of Bokčilo dates from a court hearing of 12 March 1557, when he testified about a brawl and exchange of defamatory words between two cloth carders.²²

As player, Drijemalo made his appearance in *Skup*, a comedy first performed at the wedding of Sabo Gajčin Palmota in 1555. Age and occupation of the virtual Drijemalo are unknown. What we do know, however, is that he is sluggish and good-for-nothing, his sententious speech distinguishes him as yet another in a series of Držić's rustic characters. Real Drijemalo, who, apart from this nickname, had no other identification, has been traced in the court papers of January 1536, when he testified as witness of a conflict that had taken place in the city centre.²³ With respect to nicknames, in his didactic treatise on trade Benedikt Kotruljević advises that "one should beware of people bearing ugly nicknames, for, as Seneca puts it, things bear names according to their attributes". To illustrate his statement, Kotruljević mentions Pietro Zaccara (Grubby), Giovanni Imbrattamondo (Fibber), Antonio Gabbadio (Diddler), emphasising that "a good name is a legacy that father leaves to his son".²⁴ The likelihood is that Drijemalo made no bequest to his heir (had he any at all), but was the object of bursting laughter in Držić's comedy performed at the earlier mentioned wedding. Probably "playing" the role of himself, Drijemalo's appearance on the contrived scenery of Palmota's palace was a sight to be remembered. It is certain that Drijemalo belonged to the everyday "cast" of the Ragusan villains who, in plays, usually acted themselves and aroused laughter wherever they performed.²⁵ In a case of 17 January 1547, when, innkeeper Vuić, together with the nobleman Pandolfo Pozza, testified about a brawl in his tavern, by the side of the Drijemalo's nickname the clerk also added his name - Ivan.²⁶ On 1 February 1550 Drijemalo raised an action against nobleman Nikola, who had struck him on the hand so hard that he bled while passing down *Crevljarska ulica* (Shoemakers' Street). The assault was witnessed by a number of shoemakers.²⁷ Several days later, on 6 February 1550, Paskoje Zelenko and Ivan Drijemalo were accused of having beaten up a man and torn his shirt.²⁸

²² *Lam. Int.*, vol. 100, f. 253v.

²³ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 83, f. 264.

²⁴ Benedikt Kotruljević, *O trgovini i savršenom trgovcu*, trans. Žarko Muljačić. Dubrovnik: DTS, 1989: pp. 128-129.

²⁵ M. Bahtin, *Stvaralaštvo Fransoa Rablea*: p. 133.

²⁶ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 92, f. 196v.

²⁷ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 94, f. 66.

²⁸ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 94, f. 70.

That year Drijemalo started working as a butcher, barber-surgeon Nikola Markov being the first victim of his violence-prone behaviour.²⁹ Drijemalo was present at Obrad's butcher shop in February of 1551, when several people fought bitterly over a skin: he witnessed in favour of Stjepan Vlahičev from Ploče.³⁰ At the end of the same year, Drijemalo testified at court again. The case involved a hog theft. Stolen from Ivan Nale, the hog was allegedly slaughtered by a certain Raosav and meat sold in the town.³¹ In March of 1552 Ivan Drijemalo raised an action against a certain Stjepan for slander and assault.³² In April of the same year he himself was accused of similar aggressive behaviour towards Petar Ivanov.³³ In 1558 and 1559 the records mention him only as witness.³⁴ The clerk made note of Drijemalo's address - *Sopra nove rupe*.³⁵ The environment of a butcher's shop apparently stimulated Drijemalo's hot-tempered behaviour towards another offence. When, on 6 January 1560, Margarita, a maid, came to purchase a piece of pork, Drijemalo insulted her and threatened with fists.³⁶

The character of Tripo or Tripko, Tripe, Tripeta or even Tripče, as Držić likes to vary, appears in two comedies - *Dundo Maroje* and *Tripče de Utolče*. Judging by the evidence, Tripko, too, had been modelled after a real person, the characterisation being based on the idea of a distrustful eccentric, who speaks to himself and whose ambiguous lines convey some of Držić's critical attitudes. Being from Kotor, Tripo is the object of Ragusan contempt, epitomised in the story about the urine-washed pears the *Kotorani* intended to sell in Dubrovnik but, given no choice, ultimately ate the fruit themselves.³⁷

In an action of 27 June 1542, a certain Tripko Kotoranin was summoned as witness, no additional data concerning his identification, occupation or address being entered, leaving us to speculate on the true identity of Držić's model.³⁸ It is difficult to ascertain whether it was the same man who had died

²⁹ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 94, f. 120v.

³⁰ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 95, f. 58v.

³¹ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 95, f. 236.

³² *Lam. Int.*, vol. 96, f. 42v.

³³ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 96, f. 57v.

³⁴ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 103, f. 73v.

³⁵ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 102, f. 85. Today the street is known as *Ulica od rupa*. The construction of *rupe* (literally "holes"), huge dry wells used for grain storage, was completed in 1590.

³⁶ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 103, f. 81v.

³⁷ »Arkulin.«, Act Two, Scene III, in: M. Držić, *Djela*: p. 720.

³⁸ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 88, f. 38v.

in Dubrovnik in 1572, and whose name was recorded as Andrija Cvjetkov, nicknamed Tripun or Tripe. He was a master mariner of considerable wealth, but without heirs.³⁹ Judging by his age (he died old), he was a peer of Držić's virtual Tripče from *Dundo Maroje* and *Tripče de Utoľče*. His sizeable wealth must have placed him among the prominent citizens of Dubrovnik, a reason enough to earn himself a role in a comedy. Tripče's line "Take my ducats, take my honour and life" may have been the life's credo of the mentioned Kotor-born Ragusan who, in his elaborate will, carefully distributes his ducats to churches and the clergy, religious orders and fraternities in hope of salvation, being equally generous to the needy and poor of Dubrovnik and his native Kotor.

Dragić features in *Tirena* as Radat's son and a boy who still shares the bed with his mother, cuddled up against her feet. After a span of seven years, he has grown into a young man in *Grižula*.⁴⁰ On 6 May 1553 Raosava Dominkova accused Milica, wife of court warden Raosav, and their son-in-law Dragić for attempted murder in her house above St Dominik.⁴¹ The trial accounts mention him again on 13 February 1554 (noted only as Dragić). He accused Vlaho Nikolin, a young man servant, for stealing his *nigro fildrano*.⁴²

Ilija Mazija makes his appearance in Act IV, Scene seven, of *Dundo Maroje*. Pomet addresses him as *mazuvjer* (swindler), *unjigalo* (flatterer), *haramija* (brigand) and drunkard. Although by the attributes listed one might think of him as the local scoundrel, the warm-hearted personality and relationship between Pomet and Mazija, who, for the sake of good humour, jest at each other's expense (Mazija also calls Pomet *vuhva* or cheat), speaks of Držić's warm attitude towards Mazija. This minor character exchanges but a few lines with Pomet, a short dialogue on the latest events in the City. It is possible,

³⁹ *Test. Not.*, vol. 43, ff. 106v-113. Andrija Cvjetkov, called Tripun, died on 21 March 1571, of old age, as underlined in the will. He distributed his immense wealth to the town churches and confraternities. He bequeathed his house and factories in Gruž to the parish church of St Nicholas, while his estate in Kotor was inherited by the daughter of Bernard Jelin from Kotor. The rest, including residence opposite St Nicholas church on Prijeko, he left to his wife Mada to enjoy for life and upon her death, it was to be sold and the money used for charity purposes—for the poor, buying out the slaves and provision of dowries for poor young girls.

⁴⁰ S. Stojan, »Držičevi Konavljanici«: p. 41. In this study I have not identified Dragić himself, but his family originating from Pridvorje. Dragić mentioned in Držić's plays dwelled in the City and the playwright encounters him in the everyday life of Renaissance Dubrovnik.

⁴¹ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 98, f. 59.

⁴² *Lam. Int.*, vol. 99, f. 5v.

however, that upon Držić's prompting, Mazija, town warden, appeared before the Ragusan audience obviously amused by the sight of a familiar face. The companies of actors generally recruited educated or at least literate members who, at the time, usually came from the noble circles and who attended the humanistic school until the age of twenty. Young men from well-off citizen families also attended the school, but certainly in a lesser number. That is why in Držić's time the troupes traditionally consisted of young patrician males. There are details, however, that point to the fact that in the performances of *Dundo Maroje*, and a number of other comedies, some of Držić's contemporaries from the lower ranks were to play themselves. What dramatic justification does, for instance, have the appearance of Mazija (who hardly utters a line) if not to bring a familiar face on stage? Although in the preface of Jakov Palmota's (Palmotić) *Kristijada*, published in Rome in 1670, Stjepan Gradi (Gradić) describes how companies of young noble and nonnoble citizens were formed, each keeping to its class and age peers, apparently a clear-cut border between these troupes could not be drawn, and patrician performances were often spiced with an 'act' of an outsider or two. Gradi's description of the work and organisation of the troupes of Ragusan youths should be taken with reserve because he spent most of his days outside Dubrovnik, and he could not possibly have an accurate knowledge of the theatre practices a century and a half before his time.

Mazija, court warden, has earned his place in the everyday life of Dubrovnik by taking part in a brawl in front of Ivan Brbora's tavern on 18 April 1544 (court records also note his name, Ilija).⁴³ Mazija reappears on 7 April 1548, when he testified about a fight in which night guards, patricians Nikola Sorgo and Marin Giorgi, were injured.⁴⁴ On 1 June 1551, Ilija Mazija testified that a certain Ilija was threatening to cut off the nose of Dragna Malovčić.⁴⁵ A serious fight involving several men took place on 27 June 1553, Ilija Mazija being witness again.⁴⁶ He also testified about a similar incident of 18 August of the same year.⁴⁷ We encounter him on 14 November 1557, when he acted as witness

⁴³ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 90, f. 48v. Judging by the notary's transcription of his name (nickname)—Massia—it was probably pronounced Masija, perhaps a derivative of *mas* or *must*, grape juice during fermentation (F. Čale, in: M. Držić, *Djela*: p. 919).

⁴⁴ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 93, f. 20v.

⁴⁵ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 95, f. 129.

⁴⁶ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 98, f. 110v.

⁴⁷ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 98, f. 172.

of a low-life brawl.⁴⁸ Two weeks later, Mazija accused Stjepan Jedupko, skinner, of having pulled out his beard.⁴⁹ On 28 December 1559 Ilija Mazija testified to having witnessed Paskoje, tailor, strike Laura Petrova on the head while she was passing along *Među crevjari*.⁵⁰ He appeared again in judicial records on 14 August 1560, when he witnessed Lucija, daughter of baker Đuro, beat his son Antun until the blood gushed from the wounds.⁵¹ The last mention of him in criminal cases is from September 1560.⁵² We know that in 1551 Mazija was a married man, for in an 1551 action raised by Cvijeta Paulova against Margarita Radojeva, among the female witnesses there was also Antonina, wife of Ilija Mazija, with whom he had several sons.⁵³ Mazija is also mentioned in a court account dated 30 January 1553, when he gave an official statement about a theft that had taken place in the City.⁵⁴

The character of *negromant* (magician), a conventional Renaissance carnival figure, appears both in *Dundo Maroje* and later in *Arkulin*. Apparently, a person under the nickname of Negromant trodded the streets of sixteenth-century Dubrovnik. In early January of 1554, Radula Vukmirova raised a process against a certain grocer (*špičar*) who had threatened to cut off her nose. Her statement was confirmed by warden Vušić and Ilija “nigromante”.⁵⁵ Whether this Ilija, of whom we know nothing about, was actually an actor of the Pomet company is difficult to say; the role of Negromant in *Dundo Maroje* is demanding and challenging, for it embodies the purposefulness of the comedy, and for this reason Držić must have been careful in selecting a particularly learned and talented company member to perform it. Negromant was played by someone whom the Ragusan audience knew as their fellow citizen and player in earlier performances (in the *Pomet* comedy). Thus the audience recognised him “for his dramatic achievements rather than what he actually was”.⁵⁶ A similar thing happened with the role of negromant in *Arkulin*, if less significant, and it may well be assumed that the mentioned Ilija played it. The nickname being his personal attribute, neither of the family nor hereditary,

⁴⁸ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 102, f. 93v.

⁴⁹ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 101, f. 162v.

⁵⁰ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 103, f. 71.

⁵¹ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 103, f. 252.

⁵² *Lam. Int.*, vol. 103, f. 268v.

⁵³ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 95, f. 116.

⁵⁴ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 96, f. 232rv.

⁵⁵ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 98, f. 224.

⁵⁶ Z. Mrkonjić, »O Držićevoj teatralnosti«: p. 452.

there must have been a reason for earning it. Nickname is yet another proof that the performances of Držić's plays did not "exhaust themselves in ephemerality", but entered the City life from theatrical illusion.⁵⁷ Almost twenty years later, nickname Negromant reappears in the court records. On 20 November 1577, tailor Nikola, son of Vicenco Negromant and resident of *Garbina ulica*, insulted the wife of Marko Stražanić by calling her "a bastard-bearing whore and prostitute".⁵⁸ It is less likely that this case involved one of the players performing Držić's comedies, since the nickname may have been earned thanks to a colourful Carnival mask, the popularity of which had prevailed before Držić wrote his comedies.⁵⁹

The character of old man Grižula or *remeta* (hermit), so called on account of his ascetic life, the literary historians tended to interpret as a synthesis of diverse literary types, and his retreat to wilderness an act of aristocratic whim.⁶⁰ Here, too, we could be speaking of a real person after whom Držić modelled his Grižula. On 16 January 1526, a certain Tomuša, wife of Remeta Brdar, testified together with Margarita, wife of Vlahuša the wool carder, in an action at the court of law.⁶¹

Držić mentioned in his plays a number of his contemporaries, who owed their prominence to the demeanour, temperament, work, villainous or excentric behaviour. Seemingly irrelevant, these fleeting references were, however, the result of meticulous selection. Držić tended to single out the persons whose mention in the comedy would appeal most to the contemporary audience and add to the credibility of his artistic message. It was the interplay between fictional narrative and episodes from everyday life, a tuneful harmony between the world of art and factual events that was to arouse laughter, comedy's ultimate goal.⁶² It was on this character pool drawn from real life and the audience's reception that Držić built his dramatic concept. That is why the mention of the names of Milašica, shoemaker Šile, or shopkeeper Petar Longo has little effect upon the audience other than Držić's. All of Držić's authentic contemporaries, referred to in the comedies under their real names or nicknames,

⁵⁷ Z. Mrkonjić, »O Držićevoj teatralnosti«: p. 454.

⁵⁸ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 113, f. 184.

⁵⁹ *Lam Int.*, vol. 73, f. 132. On 17 February 1523, one among the masked youths represented a mage and sang.

⁶⁰ M. Držić, *Djela*: p. 122.

⁶¹ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 76, f. 115.

⁶² Paul Ricoeur, »Preplitanje historije i fikcije«. *Quorum* 32/4 (1990): pp. 236-247.

by occupation, character or physical features, the places they frequented, lived and worked and upon whose identity the playwright built his comic system, were common people, showing that Držić's attention focuses primarily on the urban social structure marked by sedimentation: the wretched and poor, described by Držić in all of their human misery, and the upper rank, given in a sketch. The audience no doubt knew Miho, Vlaho and Đivo Pešica, the company celebrities, both as good actors and as young patricians or better-off citizens, for the playwright persists in calling them by their real names. They, however, are not the object of laughter. Their barbs are at someone else's expense, and Držić's audience was left to speculate on the true identity of uncle Maroje—whether the furious father was a Bobali, Luccari, Sorgo, Bona or some other Ragusan nobleman. In the treatment of nobler characters, he followed in the footsteps of his predecessor, Dante, who praised the virtues of the people he described, but when it came to their flaws, he left them to be tackled by the spirits.⁶³

The dialogue between the urban space and the city-dweller gives rise to a host associations, reminiscences and allusions.⁶⁴ Such a dialogue resides with those contemporaries whom Držić merely mentioned and who have not been awarded leading roles, as well as with those whose appearance in Držić's virtual world was ephemeral. Demystifying the characters such as Milašica and other representatives of the common town folk, depicting the city of his local experience, incorporating these recognisable contemporaries who lived and worked in different parts of the city into the artistic fabric of his play, Držić not only mapped the rhythm of city life, but afforded an image of the city's urban layout: *Ulica među crevjare*, *Luža* with Orlando, Great Fountain, *Peline*, *Duičina ulica*, *Kriva ulica*, *Garište*, etc. The likes of Šile, Drijemalo or Mazija stand in marked contrast to the Renaissance *kortedant* (courtier), *uomo universale* of courtly manners.⁶⁵ Držić had little affection for this rank, and tended to portray them as charlatans, ignorant flatterers who spent their time wooing ladies, idle, arrogant, haughty, debauched and self-centred, and their women, such as Laura, character of his *Dundo Maroje*, immoral. Držić's ordinary people are interspersed throughout the urban landscape. If we try to

⁶³ On this see Natalino Sapegno in: *Storia della Letteratura Italiana*, vol. 2 - *Il Trecento*, ed. Emilio Cecchi and Natalino Sapegno. Milano: Garzanti, 1965: p. 504.

⁶⁴ Rudi Supek, *Grad po mjeri Čovjeka*. Zagreb: Naprijed, 1987.

⁶⁵ Peter Burke, »Il cortigiano«, in: *L'uomo del Rinascimento*, ed. Eugenio Garin. Bari: Editori Laterza, 2000: pp. 136-165.

locate the places they frequented, we shall be able to draw the urban layout of the City centre: Mazija, a court warden in real life, spent his time in front of *Luža*, in *Placa*, in front of the Court Hall, etc. Shoemakers Šile and Čičilija (or Petar Šile and Pjetro Čičilijano in real life) had their shops in Shoemakers' Street, *sentaliija* (seamstress) had a shop in *Garište*. Duičina Street was notorious for its women of bad reputation, among whom dominated a certain "fairy" Kata Matkova Profumanica (Propumanica in *Novela od Stanca*), Bokčilo, a rustic from Konavle, kept a tavern in St Barbara's Street, etc. All the places mentioned were frequented by noblemen and commoners alike, maids and male servants, mariners, merchants, clergymen, noblewomen even, and represented gathering places where daily issues of greater or lesser importance were discussed, and attitudes and public opinion created. If so, despite their lower social positions, Šile, Čičilo or Kata Matkova Profumanica, her fellow-prostitutes Kitica and Perlica, Drijemalo (butcher), Mazija and the likes are not outsiders. In modern terms, they could be described as "opinion makers" of their time.

Citizen Petar Longo, shopkeeper and Držić's contemporary, is mentioned only once in *Arkulin* for having sent his friend some horsebeans and lentils, food traditionally eaten during fast. Držić here alludes to Longo's stinginess, since as a wealthier citizen, probably member of St Anthony's confraternity, he could afford something "more nourishing and sophisticated" than a meagre fast diet.⁶⁶ A court entry of 30 December 1550 cites Margarita, wife of Petar Longo, as witness to a women's brawl.⁶⁷

In *Grižula*, a comedy first performed at a festivity of Vlaho Sorgo, most likely in 1556, the authentic townsmen and Držić's contemporaries are mentioned: shoemaker Šile, Đan Fidino, needle seller, and *sentaliija* (seamstress) from *Garište*⁶⁸. Renaissance marked a change in the Ragusan clothes consumption habits and one's attitude to personal display. Even servant girls took to their appearance, giving rise to popular fashion trends outside the elite.

⁶⁶ »Arkulin«, Act One, Scene I, in: M. Držić, *Djela*: p. 711.

⁶⁷ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 95, f. 15.

⁶⁸ »Grižula«, Act Two, Scene VI, in: M. Držić, *Djela*: p. 630. Both Frano Čale and Milan Rešetar assume that *sentaliija* was the name of a woman who had lived in *Garište*, but so far I have not been able to trace such a female name in any of the archival documents of the sixteenth century or earlier. Apparently, the word denoted some sort of a tailor's clothing trade. *Sentalija* comes from the verb *sentati*, probably derived from the Italian verb *asestare* meaning "make, adapt" as conveyed by the expression "gunje sentat na prove" or alter and try out clothes (*Grižula*, Act Four, Scene III, p. 638).

Dressmakers are also mentioned in Nikola Nalješković's *Komedija VII*.⁶⁹ Artisan and needle seller Gian Figino, Italian by origin, had settled in Dubrovnik probably before 1530. His shop and workshop was between Placa and *Među polače*.⁷⁰ Although he himself took no part in litigations, his son Fabrizio, however, has been traced in the Criminal Court records of 1532. He claimed that a certain Montenegrin had stolen a number of items and personal belongings from his household.⁷¹ The allegation was invented, because, in July of 1532, Marija, wife of Gian Figino, raised an action against her own son, Fabrizio Figino, on the allegation that he himself had stolen the items from his household and sold them to Antun the blacksmith.⁷² In May 1550 Teodor, son of Gian Figino, while frequenting Sorgo's *butiga* opposite the Church of St Blaise, was beaten up by a patrician, Marin Gradi, and his baretta was thrown on the floor.⁷³ In February 1556 a certain Andrija Valini raised an action against Teodor Figino, his son and maid.⁷⁴ In January 1566 Teodor Figino physically assaulted Kristo Trojanov, *librar* (stationer).⁷⁵

Petar Šile kept a shoeshop in *Ulica među crevjari* (Between the shoemakers Street). Business competition often gave way to quarrels and brawls. Bootmakers apparently minded little for manners in their communication with unsatisfied customers. As to why the young maid Omakala was instructed by her mistress to go to Šile's shop may be gleaned from the jocund verses occasioning the Carnival *Mužika od crevljara* by Antun Sasin.⁷⁶ Shoemakers were organised in a confraternity. Their shoes varied in both model and size (*ohšubre, klopci, cokule na bnetačku, štopele s plutom, pantufe*), particularly those made to satisfy the extravagant and individual taste of the noble ladies. Second-hand shoes once worn by lords and ladies could do wonders for the feet of their servants if properly repaired by a good shoemaker, as documented by Nalješković in *Komedija VII*.⁷⁷ But ladies of the Renaissance Dubrovnik took

⁶⁹ *Pjesme Nikole Dimitrovića i Nikole Nalješkovića*, ed. Vatroslav Jagić and Đuro Daničić. [Stari pisci hrvatski, vol. V]. Zagreb: JAZU, 1873: p. 282.

⁷⁰ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 114, f. 175.

⁷¹ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 81, f. 14.

⁷² *Lam. Int.*, vol. 81, f. 117.

⁷³ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 94, f. 145.

⁷⁴ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 100, f. 8v.

⁷⁵ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 107, f. 93.

⁷⁶ *Djela Petra Zoranića, Antuna Sasina, Savka Gučetića Bendeševića*, ed. Pero Budmani. [Stari pisci hrvatski, vol. XVI]. Zagreb: JAZU, 1888: p. 172.

⁷⁷ *Pjesme Nikole Dimitrovića i Nikole Nalješkovića*: p. 277.

special joy in ordering new pairs of shoes with the local artisans or Italians. Lady Dobre, mother-in-law of the fair Adrijana in *Skup*, scorns young brides for being much too fashion trendy and appearance oriented, mentioning their purchase of shoes at Čičilija's shop.⁷⁸ The latter was Pietro of Sicily, apparently most skilled in the making of fine shoes, and thus most popular among the better-off and younger female population of mid-sixteenth century Dubrovnik. He was married to a local. His name appears in the Court records of 9 January 1550, on account of a disagreement with a Milanese tobacconist, Anguili, that developed into a fight and eventually, brought them to court. Only a day later, on 10 January 1550, in Ulica od Sigurate his wife was the victim of defamation.⁷⁹ In April that same year, on behalf of his wife, artisan Pietro Čičiliano, shoemaker—as entered by the court clerk—raised an action against Ivan Stjepanović for sexual slander, for the latter called his wife whore and harlot at their front door in Široka ulica.⁸⁰ Later that year, in July, shoemaker Pietro Čičiliano was accused of having wounded Nikola, swordsman, by cutting off a piece of his flesh which caused severe bleeding.⁸¹

These events reveal that, apart from the business aspect, the shoeshops played an important social role, being frequented by colourful processions where information and gossip circulated daily. Similar to Placa, the main street, Ragusan patricians and well-to-do citizens would stroll down the bustling *Crevljarska ulica* and drop into a shop to hear the latest gossip, or simply stay attuned to the voice of the common folk. Young apprentices were a reason more for maids to frequent these places, pick a rumour or two and spread it throughout the city. This street was often a setting of brawls, physical assaults and brutal beatings. Archival documents testify to an incident which involved Marin Držić. While strolling with his friend Martin Šumičić down the street, Držić experienced an unpleasant encounter with a young sailor Vlaho Kanjica, who hit him with a stick in April 1548.⁸² There is reason to believe that shoemaker Šile was popular among his townsmen, as judicial documents provide no scandal involving his name. Šile is mentioned, though, as a witness of a fight between Jakov Gondola and Dominko Gozze that took place in *Ulica među velike crevljare* on 16 April 1548.⁸³ The court records also have him as

⁷⁸ »Skup«, Act Three, Scene I, in: M. Držić, *Djela*: p. 575.

⁷⁹ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 94, f. 50.

⁸⁰ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 94, f. 114.

⁸¹ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 95, f. 175.

⁸² Vinko Foretić, »O Marinu Držiću«. *Rad JAZU* 338 (1965): pp. 5-146.

⁸³ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 93, f. 28v.

witness in a trial between Antun Giorgi, soldier, and nobleman Ivan Bonda on 1 April 1554. Occasionally, the noble ladies would pay a visit to the shoeshops themselves instead of sending indentured serving girls, a practice preferred by Omakala's mistress, for example. Thus they often found themselves midst fights between apprentices and their masters, or customers even. The noblewoman Lisa Gondola was to witness such a fight in the shoeshop of Ivan Radibratović. The latter was beaten by Marko Nikolić, also bootmaker.⁸⁴ The brawls often involved violent women. Thus on 30 August 1548, a woman entered the shoeshop of Marino of Bari and upon his greeting, she hit him with the fist. The blow was also witnessed by the shoemaker's wife Andrijula and many other artisans in the street.⁸⁵

Although Đanpjetro, goldsmith, is not among the characters of *Dundo Maroje*, the mention of this artisan, whose precious craftsmanship Maro Marojev commissioned for his adored courtesan, is by no means random or of lesser importance.⁸⁶ Unable to grasp the Dubrovnik that Držić knew, historians, puzzled by Đanpjetro's identity, tended to focus their research on Italy. Frano Čale draws attention to Petar Kolendić and his study of Roman goldsmiths in the first half of the sixteenth century, producing the names of Gianpietro delle Scale and Giovanni Pietro de Crivelli, whom he assumed may have been behind Držić's Đanpjetro. He did not understand, however, that just as the setting of Rome was actually that of Dubrovnik, in such a projection the virtual Roman goldsmith was actually a Ragusan goldsmith (of Italian origin), presumably one of those who resided above the shops in *Zlatarska ulica* (Goldsmiths' Street) and with whose appearance, work as well as funny accent Držić's audience was well acquainted. Actually, Gianpietro was from Brescia. The first mention of his name in the court records is from 11 August 1550, when he accused Pavao Radić, cloth shearer, of having beaten his wife. On 22 December 1552, Gianpietro, as well as three noblemen in his company—Miho Bobali, Petar Prodanelli and Đivo Menze—testified in a suit between Nikola Pozza and Pavao Gozze.⁸⁷ This is yet another addition to the proof of Đanpjetro being a Ragusan and not Roman goldsmith, as erroneously assumed by Kolendić. Držić could not have had a single justification to mention

⁸⁴ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 92, f. 48.

⁸⁵ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 92, f. 136.

⁸⁶ »Dundo Maroje«, Act One, Scene V and Act Three, Scene IX, in: M. Držić, *Djela*: pp. 371, 444-445.

⁸⁷ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 99, f. 184v.

a Roman goldsmith by the name of Gianpietro before his local audience. In his plays Marin Držić primarily communicated with the local people, weaving documentary accounts of the Ragusan contemporaries into his artistic fabric, goldsmith Gianpietro being no exception. The mention of his name gave rise to a host of different associations with the Ragusan audience. Gianpietro is likely to have been Držić's friend and patron, and judging by the nature of his appearance in the judicial records he was a decent and law-abiding man. There is no evidence on his arrival from Italy and settling in Dubrovnik, but his name has been traced as early as June 1538. He raised an action against a certain Simko who charged into his *butiga* with a drawn out sword and injured him.⁸⁸ In May 1545 he testified to an assault of a Ragusan fisherman Mihoč against Šimun, a Jew.⁸⁹ In July 1558 he was witness in a case between Marin Sfondrassi against shoemaker Miho, nicknamed Napolitano.⁹⁰ In August of 1558 Gianpietro raised an action against his maid Jeluša for having insulted and threatened him in his own house,⁹¹ and by the end of the same month he witnessed an incident in front of the Rector's Palace, when Palo Bobali smacked Nikola Pozza.⁹²

Like Đanpjetro, Đanpavulo belongs to the well-to-do Ragusan citizens. In *Dundo Maroje* he provided an insurance loan of 3,000 ducats from Jew Sadi. There is evidence on this being his regular activity in the then Dubrovnik.⁹³ In accordance with his profession, Đanpavulo was a man of refinement and gentlemanly manners. It may be assumed that Držić's virtual insurer and Dubrovnik's actual goldsmith Gianpaolo reported a theft of several items, clothes mainly, from his Dubrovnik residence on 22 January 1554, the thief having broken into the house through a window. Prosecution witness was the Criminal Court clerk himself, poet Vlaho Vodopić. His name reappears in the papers of 24 May 1565, when he witnessed a fight.⁹⁴ Gianpaolo's virtual surname is Oligiati, which I have not been able to trace in the judicial records, but there are numerous mentions of the surname Gigliatti, probably a misspelt form of Oligiati, or even more likely, Držić's intentional distortion of this surname.⁹⁵

⁸⁸ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 84, f. 224.

⁸⁹ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 91, f. 1.

⁹⁰ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 102, f. 13v.

⁹¹ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 102, f. 32.

⁹² *Lam. Int.*, vol. 99, f. 184v.

⁹³ »Dundo Maroje«, Act Three, Scene XV, in: M. Držić, *Djela*: p. 464.

⁹⁴ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 103, f. 206v.

⁹⁵ *Vlajkijeva genealogija Antunina*, RO Čingrija, vol. 2 (SAD): 372. Držić's nephew, who had embarked upon the writing of this genealogy, mentions the Gigliatti family. Maro Lila, whom Vetranović and Sasin cite as poet, died in Edirne, in 1570, as a Gigliatti.

The character of Đivulin, mariner, has been difficult to identify as this unusual diminutive name form of Ivan/Đivo was not to be found in sixteenth-century court records, with the exception of a certain Givulin who took a witness stand in an action on 17 August 1554.⁹⁶

In *Novela od Stanca*, Držić's best comedy in terms of style and depiction of the city's night life,⁹⁷ four women from one of Dubrovnik's brothels are mentioned: Pavica, *abadesa* of this notorious place frequented by high-spirited youth, foreign merchants and sailors, and three of her "employees" noted for loose behaviour and debauchery—Kitica, Perlica and Profumanica.

On 5 May 1542, the prostitute Milica Perlica testified, together with two other women of bad reputation, on a fight which had taken place between two women in Placa: Miljahna Radonjina and vendor Ljubica Pinatura, a scene witnessed by the crowd.⁹⁸ Kata Matkova Profumanica from *Duičina ulica* was apparently the most popular among the women of her trade. On 3 April 1544 she raised an action against Petar Radov, shoemaker, for calling her "whore" while she was standing at her front door, and throwing a stone at her.⁹⁹ Profumanica was a pugnacious type, particularly in her relations with the women from the neighbourhood. She pulled Milica Đivkova by the hair and threw her on the ground, insulting her. It took place at the end of April 1544.¹⁰⁰ In May of the same year Milica Đivkova slandered her by shouting "whore...!" at her, as witnessed by a number of women from *Duičina ulica*.¹⁰¹ In a trial between Vica Radova Porkočola and butcher Luka Buha on 30 May 1544, several women from Duičina Street were summoned to testify, Kata Profumanica being among them.¹⁰² On 3 August 1545, Dragna Vuićeva accused Kata of having broken her front door lock.¹⁰³ Kata Profumanica was among the carnival ravers in Peline and Rudanova Street in the night of 10 March 1546, when a fight broke out and Bernardo, son of Jakov the banker, was injured.¹⁰⁴ Around ten that same evening, while on his way to a girlfriend, trumpeter Domenik

⁹⁶ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 98, f. 173v.

⁹⁷ M. Držić, *Djela*: pp. 79-84.

⁹⁸ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 86, f. 206.

⁹⁹ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 90, f. 40v.

¹⁰⁰ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 90, f. 62.

¹⁰¹ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 90, f. 62.

¹⁰² *Lam. Int.*, vol. 90, f. 84v.

¹⁰³ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 91, f. 130.

¹⁰⁴ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 91, f. 269.

Scaragini was injured with a sword so that a piece of flesh was cut off his leg. Although in the late night hours, Kata Profumanica managed to eyewitness it.¹⁰⁵ Public defamation was something she could not prevent. Slander was the reason she took Mita Simkova to court in September 1547.¹⁰⁶ In January next year, she raised an action at the Criminal Court against Petar, paver, who had clawed her across the face.¹⁰⁷ She herself appeared at court as a defendant as well. In March of 1548 Anuhla Paulova accused Katarina Profumanica for having hit her little son, as witnessed by several women from Peline. Katarina Profumanica stated her defence on the fact that “the boy gave her the two fingers and insulted her in ways more than one”.¹⁰⁸ Vukmir Vukosaljić and Nikoleta Mladenova accused Kata Matkova Profumanica on 6 March 1548 for having thrown stones at them and for showing the two fingers.¹⁰⁹ In another 1548 defamation suit raised by Profumanica, she accused the earlier mentioned Toma Simkova of slandering her in public by calling her a whore and prostitute, and of attacking her in Duičina Street.¹¹⁰

Kata Jakovljeva, alias Kata Matkova Profumanica, as identified by the court clerk, seriously injured Stana Miljkova on 1 January 1550. As she was walking home around five that night, Stana saw two men coming out of Kata's house. According to her testimony, they were *forestjeri* (foreigners). Kata suddenly attacked her with a knife. Expert witnesses *maestro* Paulo *chimico medico* Salariano and *maestro* Gianbattista Salariano testified that Stana's injury was serious but not fatal. Milica Nikolina also testified in the case. After *forestjeri* had left, she heard the wounded woman cry. In the meanwhile, Kata ran away.¹¹¹

The experience of Ragusan everyday life Držić challenged, among other things, by mentioning in two of his comedies the name of a certain Milašica, cheese seller in front of Orlando's Column. Milašica is first mentioned in *Venera i Adon* (Venus and Adonis) as a metaphor of timelessness, town's landmark like Orlando, a distinctive feature of the urban space. In a mocking yet warm-hearted tone Držić calls her *rusa* or rose:

¹⁰⁵ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 91, f. 169v.

¹⁰⁶ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 92, f. 144v.

¹⁰⁷ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 92, f. 232v.

¹⁰⁸ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 93, f. 8.

¹⁰⁹ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 93, f. 9.

¹¹⁰ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 93, f. 54v.

¹¹¹ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 94, f. 42.

“Kako upravite u Pločku ulicu,
u rep celunite Rusu Milašicu;
a ti, krajčniče, Orlandu se javi...”¹¹²

(“As you turn down Pločka alley,
You kiss the tail of Rose Milašica;
and you, newcomer, Orlando salute...”).

In the comedy *Dundo Maroje*, produced in the magnificently decorated scenery of the Council Hall on 1 or 8 February 1551, Pomet enquires about the latest events in the City. In his humourous way, Mazija depicts the images of Dubrovnik as remembered by those who, in pursuit of better life, had abandoned it years before. Mazija, thus, displays sketches from everyday life which, despite the changes of time, urban reconstructions, erections, departures, weddings and births, have remained timeless: “News? Milašica sells cheese, in front of Orlando wine is offered, husbands drink it, bread abounds in front of Luža and water at the fountain...”,¹¹³ alluding to the constant features or to what until then seemed timeless like the City itself within the stone shell. Just as the water constantly flows from the stone fountain mouth and the stone Orlando stands anchored in front of Luža,¹¹⁴ as the wine is sold and drunk, the smell of freshly baked bread spreads throughout the market, so does Milašica, time forsaken, sell her cheese at the same spot, in front of Orlando. Why of all the market sellers did Držić choose Milašica and what was it about her that particularly appealed to Držić’s audience?

In search of Milašica I sifted through the records of the Dubrovnik Criminal Court. As I had suspected, Milašica was quite familiar with the judicial procedure either as witness, defendant or plaintiff. Although hindered in my research by the scarcity of the trial accounts, which the clerks often shortened or translated into Italian to the best of their skill, I was still able to reconstruct the portrait of this intriguing woman of the Renaissance Dubrovnik.

Her real name was Đivana Milašica. The first mention of her name in the judicial records dates from 30 April 1526, when, on behalf of her nephew

¹¹² »Venere i Adon«, Scene I, in: M. Držić, *Djela*: p. 323.

¹¹³ »Dundo Maroje«, Act Four, Scene VII, in: M. Držić, *Djela*: p. 498.

¹¹⁴ Orlando’s Column was blown down in a storm in 1825, and spent the next fifty years lying in one of the dark corners of the Rector’s Palace only to be re-erected in 1879 upon the prompting of the Ragusan Illyrianists.

Milić, she raised an action against a man who had beaten him.¹¹⁵ Two years later, in February, she raised a process against a certain Tomo Simkov for hitting her.¹¹⁶ In May, she was witness at the court notary.¹¹⁷ In June, she raised an action against *bastah* (carrier) Matko for having thrown stones at her.¹¹⁸ In 1541, when her name appears in the court records again, she was presumably still a young woman. Together with several other witnesses, she testified that Mara Šumanova was verbally abused and hit by Miljak, retailer, commonly known as *Nesreća* (Trouble).¹¹⁹ Milašica lived in Peline, a street below the northern city walls where animal skins and hides were dried, a process accompanied by abominable smell. Milašica's neighbourhood was populated by the Ragusan paupers and notorious women. She had a son, most likely illegitimate. Selling cheese at the town markets and stands was her daily routine. Capable as she must have been, she managed to secure herself one of the best spots—right next to Orlando's Column. From here, she could see and be seen. She was the first among the common people to know about the newly arrived in the City and their entourage. She fed on gossip and scandals, witnessed scores of street brawls in the very town centre where mariners and merchants from the hinterland were certain to pass. She stood midst the wholesale dealers and traders, patricians proceeding to the Council sessions, noble ladies escorted by maids on their way to morning or evening mass at St Blaise's or the Cathedral, domestics rushing with bundles of fresh fish or a piece of meat from *komarda*, stopping for a second with the green sellers offering fresh cabbage from *Kono*. At Orlando's Column adulterers and whores were exposed and flogged, *barabanti* (jail wardens) escorted prisoners, and guards from Luža passed their time playing cards and dice in the warm winter sun. Luža was a local term for loggia adjoining the northern side of the old St Blaise Church, in which the patricians and foreigners gathered, played chess and gambled.¹²⁰ It was also the main post of the city guard. Thanks to the perfect site of her stand, Milašica frequently found herself midst flytes, fights and brawls. Thus she witnessed that on 6 April 1542 Jeluša, a vendor, pulled

¹¹⁵ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 76, f. 262.

¹¹⁶ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 79, f. 34.

¹¹⁷ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 79, f. 119.

¹¹⁸ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 79, f. 132.

¹¹⁹ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 87, f. 51v.

¹²⁰ Although spared by the 1706 fire, loggia was pulled down before the construction of the new church of St Blaise with its main portal facing north; on this see Vinko Foretić, »Zgrada glavne straže u Dubrovniku«. *Vjesnik za arheologiju i historiju dalmatinsku* 52 (1949): pp. 1-6.

out the beard of master Jacomo *bombardijer* (gun instructor) and clawed him across the face.¹²¹ In June that same year Pavo Radonjić raised an action against Dragna Placanica. He wanted to buy of her a larger piece of cheese, but she hit him with a stick, as witnessed by Đivana Milašica.¹²² On 26 August 1542 she witnessed that she had seen Stjepan Vlahinić bleed from his ears, nose and mouth, but from the place where she usually stood, that is, in front of the Orlando's Column, she could not see how it happened.¹²³ Sexual slander often gave way to bitter quarrels between women. Radosava Đivanova publicly insulted Kata Jakobova on 2 May 1542 by telling her that she was *putana ribalda* (dirty whore) and that all of her four sons were bastards. Showing compassion for the defamed woman, Đivana Milašica, in a manner of an experienced witness, confirmed her testimony with a common opening: "Imate znati..." (You should know...)¹²⁴ In 1543 Đivana Milašica confirmed at court that Mada Mihajlova insulted Lucija, wife of Andrić, *barabant*, by calling her *putana e rofiana di gentilhomini*.¹²⁵

In the course of 1544 Milašica appeared before the Criminal Court three times. On 10 March 1544 a certain Cvijeta raised an action against her claiming that while she had been carrying water from the fountain Milašica insulted and hit her, pulled her by the hair, assisted by Krile Karlova and Milica Jakobova.¹²⁶ In May 1544 Milašica testified to having seen Marin Radonjić attack Ivan Gološok.¹²⁷ In September Milašica was a defendant in a defamation suit raised by Mara Benkova.¹²⁸

Between 1544 and 1547 there is a curious gap in Milašica's appearance in court. But by the beginning of 1547 she appears as witness to brawls and similar incidents which occurred daily (not all offences of the kind were taken to the Criminal Court). On 27 June 1547 she also witnessed when Petar Dragičević's innmaid called Frano Ciprinić *beko* (cuckold).¹²⁹

¹²¹ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 89, f. 20v.

¹²² *Lam. Int.*, vol. 88, f. 78v.

¹²³ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 87, f. 102.

¹²⁴ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 89, f. 39v. The words uttered were probably "Cheaty whore", since in sixteenth-century notarial practice all oral statements, practically without exception, were translated into Italian. Unlike the later seventeenth- and eighteenth-century practice, Croatian utterances, including rude and offensive language, were rarely recorded in the sixteenth century.

¹²⁵ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 89, f. 206v (patrician whore and pander).

¹²⁶ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 90, f. 25v.

¹²⁷ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 90, f. 116v.

¹²⁸ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 90, f. 149.

¹²⁹ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 92, f. 57 (*beko*, after Italian "becco", was an offensive word meaning "cuckold").

The very same day Milašica witnessed a fight between Raić Bogetić and Divan Mazača from Brgat.¹³⁰ In July 1547 Đivana, together with a soldier from Luža, testified that Margarita Radonjina, bread seller, insulted Ljubica Dragičeva by uttering defamatory words such as whore, *rofijana*, drunkard and tramp.¹³¹

It was on 1 October, when Milašica, sitting by Orlando's feet, heard a commotion. Her eyes caught the sight of Mihaljna Simkova being chased by the nobleman, Andrija Beneša. He seized the wretched woman in Placa, a few steps away from where Milašica was standing, and almost battered her to death. Milica was all "messy", her face covered with blood—was Milašica testimony at court.¹³²

In the course of 1547 Đivana Milašica testified twice before the clerk of the Criminal Court: on 16 April she witnessed a fight between two tailors in Placa,¹³³ and in early July her testimony was to contribute to the settlement of a long-winded process in the notary of the Criminal Court.¹³⁴

On 11 June 1550 Đivana Milašica accused Nikola, nicknamed *Blavor* (Blindworm), and his wife Franuša of defamation, claiming that they had called her *putana ribalda* as confirmed by Ljubica Dragičeva, Dragna Captatka, Petar Dragojević, baker, and Stjepan Staničin.¹³⁵ On 16 June Milašica raised a defamation action against Frano Stjepanov for having insulted her son Nikola. Witnesses in her favour were many: innkeeper Vušić, Mara Krilina, Mada, wife of dragoman Beno, and others, among whom were also the noblemen Sigismund Gradi and Jerolim Gondola. That same day Milašica also accused a certain Nikoleta, a domestic, for defaming her as a "dirty whore" in the presence of Ljubica Dragičeva, Dragna Cavtajka, Stjepan Stanišin and baker Dragojević.¹³⁶ Nobleman Antun Pozza and Đivana Milašica saw Nikola Lujev boot Vlaho Ivanov the goldsmith, and testified about it at court on 24 July 1550.¹³⁷

¹³⁰ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 92, f. 57.

¹³¹ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 92, f. 81v.

¹³² *Lam. Int.*, vol. 92, f. 153.

¹³³ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 93, f. 28v.

¹³⁴ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 92, f. 84v.

¹³⁵ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 94, f. 166.

¹³⁶ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 94, f. 165.

¹³⁷ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 94, f. 194.

On her way home from work one day in the late 1551, Milašica and butcher Nikola called *Šuplji* (Hollow) witnessed a brawl.¹³⁸ In 1552 Đivana's appearance in court tended to grow into practice. At the beginning of January she testified in a case involving a fight in Placa between Petar Vlahov, cloth shearer, and Ivan Mušuljić.¹³⁹ "From where I was standing in Placa, next to Orlando, I saw him hitting Ivan", she testified on the incident. On 11 March, together with market sellers Ivanka and Dragna Vrusičina, Milašica confirmed that Stanula Cvjetkova called Nikola Radivojević *beko*.¹⁴⁰ On 14 May 1552 Đivana Milašica pulled a knife at Dragna Matkova. Dragna claimed that Milašica intended to slash at her with a knife. Boško, baker, testified that it had taken place "under Orlando...".¹⁴¹ Apparently, this was not enough excitement for one day, as Đivana later witnessed Kladije, mason, slander the moral integrity of Lucija d'Olivieri.¹⁴²

On 26 May 1553 Miho Putniković, local tramp, slapped a Milanese Gian Francesco di Pietro across the face. The assault took place just in front of Orlando, as witnessed by Đuro, cook, *barabant* Mihailo Dimitrović, Đuro Greko and Đivana Milašica, of course.¹⁴³ Having arrived at her market spot on the morning of 29 August, a certain Petar, apparently an acquaintance of hers, insulted her by saying that she was a whore of the Greeks (the latter, along with the Armenians who spoke a similar language, arrived in Dubrovnik in pursuit of business) and of *soldati* (soldiers).¹⁴⁴

Milašica then makes a curious gap in her "legal" career, until 1 October 1554, when she testified of having heard Raosava Puljiz insult Ivan Dragojević, the stonemason.¹⁴⁵ Đivana's "withdrawal" from the city's public life may be accounted by her aging, and deteriorating health. The best market stalls were occupied by younger green sellers and vendors, who replaced her at the witness stand. Yet in 1557 she was summoned to testify in a case between skinner Đivan Pavlović and Raosava, domestic of Petar Fruljatić. Asked as to what she had witnessed, Milašica responded that she had heard Đivan call Raosava to help

¹³⁸ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 95, f. 228.

¹³⁹ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 96, f. 2v.

¹⁴⁰ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 96, f. 31v.

¹⁴¹ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 96, f. 71.

¹⁴² *Lam. Int.*, vol. 96, f. 72.

¹⁴³ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 98, f. 78.

¹⁴⁴ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 98, f. 187v.

¹⁴⁵ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 99, f. 218v.

him, but she was not in. When she finally turned up, her master beat her up.¹⁴⁶ In late September of 1558, she witnessed a fight between two women near Orlando.¹⁴⁷ At the end of August 1559 Milašica raised an action against Stana, wife of Nikola, swordsman, on the accusation of defamation and assault, as confirmed by Milica, innmaid.¹⁴⁸

On 9 August 1564 Milašica accused Stanula, wife of Matko Blavor, of having hit her while she sat “on the stairs of Orlando” spinning.¹⁴⁹ Her pugnacious temperament began to show first signs of abating. Despite hardship, age and poor health, she could not abandon her knight. Together with Marija Lopujka she testified in a suit on 19 July 1566.¹⁵⁰ Two more entries with her name can be traced during 1559. Nikola Perović, carrier, accused her of having hit him with a *tojaga* (tug) and broken his nose while he stood in front of Orlando.¹⁵¹ She testified on 20 March that year, when Antun, son of Boško *bastah*, struck Cvjetka Pavlova with a stone.¹⁵² Thus Milašica marked more than forty years of Dubrovnik's Criminal Court practice. It may well be assumed that at this point both her “careers” finally winded down.

Although of the lowest social rank, Milašica was known and recognised not only by her prominent features but by her long-standing role in the urban everyday life. Upon the mention of her name, Držić, an expert on human nature and manners, speaks of a specific kind of “emancipation”, in which a woman, following man's example, pursues perfection and confirmation of her own.¹⁵³

In Držić's Dubrovnik of the Renaissance, in which arts and sciences flourished, the concept of life concentrated on the concept of humanism expressed in personal freedom and restless pursuit for the fullness of life.¹⁵⁴ But what was it to Đivana Milašica and the likes? Having interwoven her along with other of his low-life contemporaries into the fine literary fabric, Držić reveals his extraordinary sense of dramaturgy of everyday life, theatrically

¹⁴⁶ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 101, f. 163.

¹⁴⁷ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 102, f. 57v.

¹⁴⁸ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 103, f. 8.

¹⁴⁹ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 105, f. 12.

¹⁵⁰ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 107, f. 203.

¹⁵¹ *Lam. Int.*, vol. 102, f. 148.

¹⁵² *Lam. Int.*, vol. 102, f. 198v.

¹⁵³ Jacob Burckhardt, *Kultura renesanse u Italiji* [Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien]. Zagreb: Prosvjeta, 1997: p. 362.

¹⁵⁴ Ottavia Niccoli, »Introduzione«, in: *Rinascimento al femminile*, ed. Ottavia Niccoli. Roma-Bari: Editori Laterza, 1998: pp. V-XXVII.

flavoured scenes bordering between public and private. Držić, thus, “recognised” Milašica as a person expressing her own free will but also accepting moral responsibility—a woman of the new era. Renaissance disclosed man in the fullness of his humanity and understanding of his own individuality and that of others.¹⁵⁵ Uncovering the layers of her intimacy and warm-heartedness, Držić must have been drawn to the lively spirit about her, strong personality, boldness to face the trials and tribulations of life on her own, rash and quarrelsome temperament, sharp tongue, particularly her nonverbal communication in the same way her obtrusive behaviour and verbal intrusions in front of Orlando attracted scores of people.

Joan Kelly builds her study on the question “Did women have a Renaissance?”¹⁵⁶ Unlike Renaissance men, who had several individualised faces, Renaissance women seemed to have been faceless. Man could be a rector or soldier, artist or humanist, merchant, priest, wise man or adventurer. Woman, however, could be a mother, daughter or widow, virgin or prostitute, saint or witch, Mary or Eve. She could rarely acquire any other role, and if she did, it was of entirely different nature than that of man. Since all her identities were gender-based, they overshadowed even a slightest display of individuality pursued by the woman. Milašica’s strong-willed character as well as her socio-psychological position make her a representative of a specific sociality, and her role in the everyday life of Dubrovnik, and equally so in literature, is exceptional and unique. In Vetranović’s pastoral play *Lovac i vila*, based on a conventional rape motive, a Renaissance woman stands in contrast to the urban image. A slave woman is sold at the market place in Dubrovnik. Vetranović, no doubt, envisages her on the very same market place where Milašica sold her cheese. The woman from Vetranović’s poetic vision is not passive, but makes a bold effort to be bought. And while Vetranović’s enslaved woman is the central character, Milašica is but a mere association in the course of Držić’s plot. Despite the fact, Milašica attracts far more attention in her everyday routine in front of Orlando offering cheese, scrutinising the passers-by, spins wool, chats away, swears, curses, attacks and defends herself.

Milašica embodies Jacob Burckhardt’s thesis on the Renaissance tendency to place man and woman on equal basis. This trend, however, was doomed to failure because as the Renaissance had reached its peak and was coming to a

¹⁵⁵ J. Burckhardt, *Kultura renesanse u Italiji*: p. 283.

¹⁵⁶ Margaret L. King, »La donna del Rinascimento«, in: *L'uomo del Rinascimento*: pp. 273-327.

close, a gender-based woman's role in everyday life tended to petrify, or even decline at the turn of the sixteenth century.¹⁵⁷

There is yet another link between Držić and Đivana Milašica. It is the human character more than any other urban feature that dominates a place. This rule may certainly be applied with the stone figures of St Blaise on the city walls, or Orlando in the very centre, creating a strong feeling of ambiental identity nurtured by an intimate experience with the city's mental landmarks. Držić is primarily drawn by the human nature. Having this in mind, his entire work may be interpreted as a continuous quest for the diversity of characters disclosed in taverns, grocers', shoeshops, dressmakers', by the bakers' stoves and outdoor city spaces which have a certain social flavour and add to the overall mental climate of the city. As the topographic character of one place shapes man's life, the socially creative and interesting individuals add to the city's image and its innermost identity. At times, the power of one's individuality outgrows the character of the place itself, Milašica being a good example. In Držić's perception (as well as in that of the contemporary audience), Đivana Milašica had by far surpassed the reputation of Orlando ("That Orlando is dead in Placa"),¹⁵⁸ as she, unlike his unchanging stiffness, had a bright and dark side, good and bad encounters, hawk's eye, sharp instinct, protruding voice and strong nails, psychologically woven realistic figure, adding a feeling of individual and collective identity to the spirit of its inhabitants.

While writing on the Renaissance culture in Italy 150 years ago, Burckhardt warns that "evidence will not abound".¹⁵⁹ Although the spiritual culture of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was clearly outlined before him and has been recognised by scholarship today, he believed that these perceptions with which, according to his own interpretation, he had trodden in the domain of assumption others would hardly accept as facts. The history of everyday life with its sift-like methodology casts light on these obscure areas. The example of Đivana Milašica and other real inhabitants of the Renaissance Dubrovnik mentioned in the plays of Marin Držić emphasise the literary dimension of social experience and literary meaning of historical documents. They provide answers to a rising demand for a multi-faceted approach to history, in which the history of everyday life tends to gain in significance. Based on literature, they open

¹⁵⁷ M. L. King, »La donna del Rinascimento«: pp. 273-327; Slavica Stojan, *Vjerenice i nevjernice*. Dubrovnik-Zagreb: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku and Prometej, 2003.

¹⁵⁸ »Arkulin«, Act Three, Scene I, in: M. Držić, *Djela*: p. 725.

¹⁵⁹ J. Burckhardt, *Kultura renesanse u Italiji*: p. 283.

new perspectives of historiographic scholarship beyond its traditional borders, contributing also to a better understanding of the old Croat literature. True, any attempt at describing historical events or historical reality is based on narration which, by nature, rests upon fiction. Historian's role is to develop a dialogue relevant to all aspects of historical research. This encompasses a broader conception of historical science and historical processes, in which historians necessarily employ the narrative structures in presenting historical facts. In so doing history adopts literary discourse, while literary history facilitates the analysis of historical problems and texts.¹⁶⁰

¹⁶⁰ Lloyd S. Kramer, »Književnost, kritika i historijska imaginacija: Književni izazov Haydena Whitea i Dominicka LaCapre«, in: *Nova kulturna historija*, ed. Lynn Avery Hunt. Zagreb: Naklada Ljevak, 2001: pp. 144-181.